

REMARKS

Claims 1-8, 10-18, 20-31, and 33-37 are currently pending in the subject Application.

Claims 9, 19, and 32 were previously canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claims 1-8, 10-11, 13-18, 20-21, 23-31, 33-34, 36, and 37 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,991,739 to Cupps, et al. (hereinafter “*Cupps*”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,330,554 to Altschuler (hereinafter “*Altschuler*”) further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,971,406 to Hanson (hereinafter “*Hanson*”) and U.S. Patent No. 5,895,454 to Harrington (hereinafter “*Harrington*”).

Claims 12, 22, and 35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over *Cupps* in view of *Altschuler*, *Hanson* and *Harrington*, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,797,818 to Cotter (hereinafter “*Cotter*”).

Applicant notes with thanks the Examiner’s response of 3 August 2010.

Applicant respectfully submits that all of Applicant’s arguments and amendments are without *prejudice* or *disclaimer*. In addition, Applicant has merely discussed example distinctions from the cited prior art. Other distinctions may exist, and as such, Applicant reserves the right to discuss these additional distinctions in a future Response or on Appeal, if appropriate. Applicant further respectfully submits that by not responding to additional statements made by the Examiner, Applicant does not acquiesce to the Examiner’s additional statements. The example distinctions discussed by Applicant are considered sufficient to overcome the Examiner’s rejections. In addition, Applicant reserves the right to pursue broader claims in this Application or through a continuation patent application. No new matter has been added.

I. Support for Current Claim Amendments

In compliance with 35 U.S.C. § 112, Applicant respectfully submits that support for current amendments may be found at least in the following portions of Applicant's specification, as published, provided below for the Examiner's convenience:

[0011] FIG. 1 illustrates an exemplary system 10 for brokering food order transactions among a plurality of unaffiliated sellers. System 10 includes one or more customers 12, one or more restaurants 14, and at least one server 16 associated with a website or other environment accessible to customers 12 and restaurants 14. *In general, server 16 receives a request for a food item from a customer 12 and, in response, generates and provides to the customer 12 a list of restaurants 14 from which the requested food item is available and which deliver to the location of the customer 12. The list preferably excludes all restaurants 14 from which the requested food item is not available or which do not deliver to the location of the customer 12.* For each restaurant 14 on the list, the list may reflect pricing information for the requested food item and substantially real-time delivery time information for purposes of comparison by the customer 12 or automatically. The listed sellers may be ranked according to such information. Server 16 may initiate a food order transaction with a restaurant 14 selected from the list by the customer 12 or automatically. To perform these or any other tasks, server 16 may use a food order transaction broker 18, customer information 20, and restaurant information 22.

[0018] *Food availability information for a restaurant 14 may include any information relating to the availability of one or more food items from restaurant 14 and may be substantially real-time in that the food availability information may be updated by restaurant 14 as needed to reflect the current availability of food items from restaurant 14.* For example, if a restaurant 14 suddenly runs out of a food item or an ingredient of a food item such that the food item may not be prepared or is otherwise currently unavailable from restaurant 14, restaurant 14 may update its food availability information so that customers 12 accessing server 16 may be notified accordingly. (Emphasis added).

II. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-11, 13-21, 23-34, 36, and 37 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over *Cupps* in view of *Altschuler*, further in view of *Hanson* and *Harrington*. Claims 12, 22, and 35 stand

rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over *Cupps* in view of *Altschuler, Hanson* and *Harrington*, and further in view of *Cotter*.

Applicant respectfully submits that independent Claims 1, 13, 23, and 24 in their prior, unamended form contain unique and novel limitations that are not disclosed by *Cupps, Altschuler, Hanson* and *Harrington*, either individually or in combination, however, in an effort to expedite prosecution and issuance of the subject application, Applicant submits current amendments to the claims. Thus, Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's obviousness rejection of Claims 1-37 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over the proposed combination of *Cupps, Altschuler, Hanson, Harrington*, and *Cotter*, either individually or in combination.

More specifically, Applicant respectfully submits that none of the references relied upon by the Examiner disclose ***“one or more databases comprising . . . real-time availability information identifying particular food items available from each of a plurality of unaffiliated sellers, the real-time availability information reflecting a current shortage of the one or more particular food items available from one or more of the plurality of unaffiliated sellers prior to a buyer placing an order for one or more particular food items of which there is a shortage,”*** as required by Applicant's Claims 1, 13, 23, and 24.

In rejecting Applicant's claims, the Examiner states the following:

Additionally, *Harrington teaches the system to include availability information (column 4, line 41) which in the restaurant application would inherently include shortages of food items or ingredients because are the factors which would effect availability.* At the time the invention was made, it would have been obvious for the person of ordinary skill in the art to communicate the real time delivery time and availability to the customer in modified *Cupps* in a manner as disclosed in *Harrington* so that delivery time could be used by the customer as criteria for determining which food item to order before beginning any transaction.

(3 August 2010 Final Office Action, page 4). (Emphasis added). Applicant respectfully submits that cited references which the Examiner relies upon fail to disclose the above-referenced limitations of Applicant's claims. For further clarification, Applicant respectfully directs the Examiner's attention to column 4, lines 35-50 of the specification of *Harrington*, provided below, on which the Examiner relies:

If a user activates the ‘purchase’ button (as an example of a purchase/selection notification means), the vendors modified website software 24 transmits a transaction notification (33 in FIG. 2) back to the database administration software 21. This indication may be in the form of a data packet 33 including information relating to the product/service ordered, the price, availability and other identifying data relevant to the user. As the user navigates his or her way through a particular vendor website (e, 120) or number of vendor websites (e.g. 12a-j). multiple transaction notifications 33 can be sent back to the database administration software 21. *The administration software 21 monitors the user’s purchases and provides a realtime total or cost.* Goods ordered etc. to the user. Currency conversion is handled transparently and supplementary information (such as delivery times etc) may is provided to the user. (Emphasis added).

As shown above, the portion of *Harrington* relied on by the Examiner merely discloses, among other things, providing availability information *after* a user has made a purchase. This is not analogous to a database having *real-time availability information identifying particular food items available from each of a plurality of unaffiliated sellers*, the real-time availability information *reflecting a current shortage* of the one or more particular food items available *from one or more of the plurality of unaffiliated sellers prior to a buyer placing an order for one or more particular food items of which there is a shortage*,” as required by Applicant’s claims. More simply stated, notifying a customer of the availability of an item after the customer has already placed an order as disclosed in *Harrington* actually teaches away from Applicant’s claims which allow buyers to eliminate vendors who do not currently have the desired item available. The only mention of real-time information in the portion of *Harrington* relied on by the Examiner is with reference to providing a real-time total or cost, however, this is not analogous with *real-time availability information reflecting a current shortage* of the one or more particular food items available *from one or more of the plurality of unaffiliated sellers prior to a buyer placing an order for one or more particular food items of which there is a shortage*, as required by Applicant’s claims. In fact, *Harrington* is silent, and therefore, fails to disclose, among other things, the above-referenced limitation of Applicant’s claims.

Similarly, *Cupps*, *Altschuler*, *Hanson*, and *Cotter* also fail to disclose these limitations of Applicant’s claims and there is no teaching in any of the references that suggests that it would have been obvious to combine the disclosures of any these references to arrive at Applicant’s claimed invention as recited in Applicant’s claims, particularly the limitation “*one or more databases comprising . . . real-time availability information identifying particular food items available from*

each of a plurality of unaffiliated sellers, the real-time availability information *reflecting a current shortage* of the one or more particular food items available *from one or more of the plurality of unaffiliated sellers prior to a buyer placing an order for one or more particular food items of which there is a shortage.*” Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner’s obviousness rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) of Claims 1-8, 10-18, 20-31, and 33-37 over *Cupps, Altschuler, Hanson, Harrington, and Cotter*, whether taken individually or in combination, may not be properly maintained. As such, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections to Claims 1-8, 10-18, 20-31, and 33-37 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

III. The Office Action Fails to Properly Establish a *Prima Facie* case of Obviousness over the Proposed *Cupps-Altschuler-Hanson-Harrington- -Cotter* Combination According to the UPSTO Examination Guidelines

Applicant respectfully submits that the Office Action fails to properly establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness based on the proposed combination of *Cupps, Altschuler, Hanson, Harrington*, or *Cotter*, either individually or in combination, and in particular, the Office Action fails to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness based on the “Examination Guidelines for Determining Obviousness Under 35 U.S.C. 103 in View of the Supreme Court Decision in *KSR International Co. v. Teleflex Inc.*” (the “Guidelines”).

As reiterated by the Supreme Court in *KSR International Co. v. Teleflex Inc. (KSR)*, the framework for the objective analysis for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103 is stated in *Graham v. John Deere Co.* (383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966)). Obviousness is a question of law based on underlying factual inquiries. These factual inquiries enunciated by the Court are as follows:

- (1) Determining the scope and content of the prior art;
- (2) Ascertaining the differences between the claimed invention and the prior art; and
- (3) Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.

(Notice, 72 Fed. Reg. 57527 (Oct. 10, 2007)). Objective evidence relevant to the issue of obviousness must be evaluated by Office personnel. (383 U.S. 17–18, 148 USPQ 467 (1966)). As stated by the Supreme Court in *KSR*, “While the sequence of these questions might be reordered in

any particular case, the [*Graham*] factors continue to define the inquiry that controls.” (*KSR*, 550 U.S. at ___, 82 USPQ2d at 1391).

However, it is important to note that the Guidelines require that Office personnel “***ensure that the written record includes findings of fact*** concerning the state of the art and the teachings of the references applied. (Notice, 72 Fed. Reg. 57527 (Oct. 10, 2007)). In addition, the Guidelines remind Office personnel that the “***factual findings made by Office personnel are the necessary underpinnings to establish obviousness.***” (*id.*). Further, “***Office personnel must provide an explanation to support an obviousness rejection*** under 35 U.S.C. 103. (*id.*). In fact, “35 U.S.C. 132 requires that the applicant be notified of the reasons for the rejection of the claim so that he or she can decide how best to proceed” and “clearly setting forth findings of fact and the rationale(s) to support a rejection in an Office action leads to the prompt resolution of issues pertinent to patentability.” (*id.*).

With respect to the subject application, the Office Action has not shown the ***factual findings necessary to establish obviousness*** or even ***an explanation to support the obviousness rejection*** based on the proposed combination of *Cupps, Altschuler, Hanson, Harrington, and Cotter*. The Office Action merely states that “it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to communicate the real time delivery time and availability to the customer in modified Cupps in a manner as disclose in Harrington.” (3 August 2010 Final Office Action, pages 4). Applicant respectfully disagrees and respectfully submits that the Examiner’s conclusory statements are not sufficient to establish the ***factual findings necessary to establish obviousness*** and are not a sufficient ***explanation to support the obviousness rejection*** based on the proposed combination of *Cupps, Altschuler, Hanson, Harrington, and Cotter*. ***Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to provide proper support for the obviousness rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103 as necessitated by the Guidelines, including the factual findings necessary to establish obviousness to “ensure that the written record includes findings of fact concerning the state of the art and the teachings of the references applied.*** (Notice, 72 Fed. Reg. 57527 (Oct. 10, 2007)).

The Guidelines further provide guidance to Office personnel in “determining the scope and content of the prior art” such as, for example, “Office personnel must first obtain a thorough understanding of the invention disclosed and claimed in the application.” (Notice, 72 Fed. Reg.

57527 (Oct. 10, 2007)). The scope of the claimed invention must be clearly determined by giving the claims the “broadest reasonable interpretation consistent with the specification.” (See *Phillips v. AWH Corp.*, 415 F.3d 1303, 1316, 75 USPQ2d 1321, 1329 (Fed. Cir. 2005) and MPEP § 2111.). In addition, the Guidelines state that any “***obviousness rejection should include***, either explicitly or implicitly in view of the prior art applied, ***an indication of the level of ordinary skill.***” (Notice, 72 Fed. Reg. 57528 (Oct. 10, 2007)). With respect to the subject Application, the Office Action has not provided ***an indication of the level of ordinary skill.*** ***Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to provide proper support for the obviousness rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103 as necessitated by the Guidelines, including an indication of the level of ordinary skill, relied upon by the Examiner.*** (Notice, 72 Fed. Reg. 57527 (Oct. 10, 2007)).

The Guidelines still further provide that once the *Graham* factual inquiries are resolved, Office personnel must determine whether the claimed invention would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art. (*Id.*). For example, the Guidelines state that ***Office personnel must explain why the difference(s) between the prior art and the claimed invention would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art.*** (*Id.*). In addition, the Guidelines state that the proper analysis is ***whether the claimed invention would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art after consideration of all the facts.*** (*Id.* and See 35 U.S.C. 103(a)).

With respect to the subject Application, the Office Action has not expressly resolved any of the *Graham* factual inquiries to determine whether Applicant’s invention would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art. In addition, the Office Action fails to ***explain why the difference(s) between the proposed combination of Cupps, Altschuler, Hanson, Harrington, Cotter, and Applicant’s claimed invention would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art.*** The Office Action merely states that “so that delivery time could be used by the customer as criteria for determining which food item to order before beginning any transaction.” (3 August 2010 Final Office Action, page 4). Applicant respectfully disagrees and further respectfully requests clarification as to how this statement ***explains why the difference(s) between the proposed combination of Cupps, Altschuler, Hanson, Harrington, Cotter, and Applicant’s claimed invention would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art.*** Applicant further respectfully submits that the Examiner is using the subject Application as a template to formulate reconstructive hindsight, which constitutes impermissible use of hindsight under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

The Guidelines yet further state that the “key to supporting any rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103 is the *clear articulation of the reason(s) why the claimed invention would have been obvious.*” (Notice, 72 Fed. Reg. 57528 (Oct. 10, 2007)). In fact, the Supreme Court in *KSR* noted that “*the analysis supporting a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103 should be made explicit.*” (*id.*). The Court quoting *In re Kahn* (441 F.3d 977, 988, 78 USPQ2d 1329, 1336 (Fed. Cir. 2006)), stated that “[R]ejections on *obviousness cannot be sustained by mere conclusory statements*; instead, there *must be some articulated reasoning with some rational underpinning to support the legal conclusion of obviousness.*” (*KSR*, 550 U.S. at ___, 82 USPQ2d at 1396). The Guidelines provide the following seven rationales:

- (A) Combining prior art elements according to known methods to yield predictable results;
- (B) Simple substitution of one known element for another to obtain predictable results;
- (C) Use of known technique to improve similar devices (methods, or products) in the same way;
- (D) Applying a known technique to a known device (method, or product) ready for improvement to yield predictable results;
- (E) “Obvious to try”—choosing from a finite number of identified, predictable solutions, with a reasonable expectation of success;
- (F) Known work in one field of endeavor may prompt variations of it for use in either the same field or a different one based on design incentives or other market forces if the variations would have been predictable to one of ordinary skill in the art;
- (G) Some teaching, suggestion, or motivation in the prior art that would have led one of ordinary skill to modify the prior art reference or to combine prior art reference teachings to arrive at the claimed invention.

Applicant respectfully submits that the *Office Action fails to provide any articulation, let alone, clear articulation of the reasons why Applicant’s claimed invention would have been obvious.* For example, the *Examiner has not adequately supported the selection and combination of Cupps, Altschuler, Hanson, Harrington, and Cotter to render obvious Applicant’s claimed invention.* The Examiner’s unsupported conclusory statements that ““it would have been obvious for the person of ordinary skill in the art to communicate the real time delivery time to the customer in modified Cupps in a manner as disclosed in Harrington,” and “so that delivery time could be used by the customer as criteria for determining which food item to order before beginning any

transaction” *do not adequately provide clear articulation of the reasons why Applicant’s claimed invention would have been obvious.* (3 August 2010 Final Office Action, pages 4).

Thus, if the Examiner continues to maintain the obvious rejection based on the proposed combination of *Cupps, Altschuler, Hanson, Harrington, and Cotter*, ***Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner provide proper support for the obviousness rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103 as necessitated by the Guidelines, including a statement by the Examiner identifying what portion(s) of the references provide a teaching, suggestion, or motivation that would have led one of ordinary skill to modify the prior art reference or combine prior art reference teachings to arrive at the claimed invention in accordance with the Examiner’s statement in a prior Office Action that rational G is applicable here.***

IV. Applicant’s Claims are Patentable over the Proposed *Cupps-Altschuler-Hanson-Harrington-Cotter* Combination

As mentioned above, Claims 1, 13, 23, and 24, as amended, are considered patentably distinguishable over *Cupps, Altschuler, Hanson, Harrington, and Cotter*.

With respect to dependent Claims 2-8, 10-12, 14-18, 20-22, 25-31, and 33-37: Claims 2-8, and 10-12 depend from Claim 1; Claims 14-18, and 20-22 depend from Claim 13; Claims 25-31, and 33-37 depend from Claim 24. As set forth above, each of Claims 1, 13, 23, and 24 are considered patentably distinguishable over the proposed combination of *Cupps, Altschuler, Hanson, Harrington, and Cotter*. Thus, dependent Claims 2-8, 10-12, 14-18, 20-22, 25-31, and 33-37 are considered to be in condition for allowance for at least the reason of depending from an allowable claim as well as for further distinctions.

For at least the reasons set forth herein, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1-8, 10-18, 20-31, and 33-37 are not rendered obvious by the proposed combination of *Cupps, Hanson, Harrington, and Cotter*. Applicant further respectfully submits that Claims 1-8, 10-18, 20-31, and 33-37 are in condition for allowance. Thus, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of Claims 1-8, 10-18, 20-31, and 33-37 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be reconsidered and that Claims 1-8, 10-18, 20-31, and 33-37 be allowed.

CONCLUSION:

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, this application is considered to be in condition for allowance, and early reconsideration and a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Although the Applicants believe no additional fees are deemed to be necessary; the undersigned hereby authorizes the Director to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any overpayments, to **Deposit Account No. 500777**. If an extension of time is necessary for allowing this Response to be timely filed, this document is to be construed as also constituting a Petition for Extension of Time Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) to the extent necessary. Any fee required for such Petition for Extension of Time should be charged to **Deposit Account No. 500777**.

Please link this application to Customer No. 53184 so that its status may be checked via the PAIR System.

Respectfully submitted,

4 October 2010
Date

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